

REMARKS

The present application was filed on August 7, 2001 with claims 1-49. Claims 1, 25 and 49 are independent. In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner: (i) rejected claims 1-49 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,681,060 to Acharya et al. (hereinafter "Acharya").

Applicants submit herewith a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131. The declaration is signed by the inventors named on the present application. The declaration and the exhibit attached thereto evidence the conception of an invention falling within independent claims 1, 25 and 49 and at least one or more dependent claims, at least as early as October 30, 2000, and thus prior to the March 23, 2001 effective date of Acharya. The declaration further evidences due diligence from October 30, 2000 until the filing date of August 7, 2001.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-49 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,



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Encl. Declaration of Prior Invention under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 (Bergman and Castelli);
Declaration of Prior Invention under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 (Li); and
Exhibit 1